DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 207 157 EA 013 884

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TITLE Student Absenteeism: Causes, Effects, and Possible Solutions.
PUB DATE 15 Jun 81
NOTE 50p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Academic Achievement; Annotated Bibliographies; *Attendance; Elementary Secondary Education; Institutional Characteristics; Parent Participation; Predictor Variables; Public Agencies; School Counseling; School Organization; Student Characteristics; *Truancy

ABSTRACT

Student absenteeism is a major concern for elementary and secondary school educators. This paper annotates 59 articles and reports dealing with the causes of, effects of, and solutions to student absenteeism. A brief glossary first defines 14 terms used in the literature. The author then surveys 14 publications on the causes of absenteeism, distinguishing student-level causes, such as personal characteristics or backgrounds, from school- and societal-level causes like school organization, teacher skills, peer pressure, or community values. Seven annotated publications on the effects of absenteeism show that it hurts both students' academic achievement and the school, where it can cause time loss and morale problems. Lastly, the author annotates 38 publications discussing six kinds of solutions to absenteeism, including punitive plans, parental involvement programs, student-centered agreements, counseling approaches, community agency programs, and nontraditional methods like open campuses or special classes. The author concludes that absenteeism has many causes and effects, but that the solutions suggested yield mixed results, depending upon the specific circumstances and the educational philosophy used. (Author/RW)

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STUDENT ABSENTEEISM: CAUSES, EFFECTS, AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Indiana University at South Bend
June 15, 1981

EA 013 884

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STUDENT ABSENTEEISM: CAUSES, EFFECTS, AND POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

> Truancy and excessive absenteeism influence an entire spectrum, from pupils whose education is affected, to teachers whose instruction is disrupted, principals who must account for empty desks, superintendents who must rely on attendance for state aid, attendance officers, home-school counselors and law enforcement officials who must contact the parents and locate absent students, judges who occasionally rule on truancy cases, and merchants who complained of daytime financial losses due to adolescent loitering and misbehavior. (Porwall:1)

Student absenteeism has been consistently identified by educators as a major concern. In a 1978 study conducted by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, eighty-six percent of those administrators responding indicated that student absenteeism was a major problem in their schools. (Brimm, Forgety, and Sadler:66)

A certain level of absence is, of course, normal and expected. "Absences are a fact of school life in the same way that adult absences are a part of the workplace." (De Leonibus:2) However, student absenteeism has been growing at a rate that can be described as alarming, while "adult truancy is not a growing problem...." (De Leonibus:2) According to health officials, a normal rate of absence for adults from their place of employment was estimated as roughly nine days per year. "For students, this would equal about seven absent days when prorated for the nine-month school year." (De Leonibus:2) Seven days of absence during a 180-day school year represented an approximate absence rate of 3.8%, or roughly a 96% attendance rate. Most schools fell well short of achieving this level. As far as the individual student was concerned,

the exact definition of what constituted excessive absence was an important point. "An annual absentee rate of more than 10 days, therefore, would be excessive except for students with severe health problems or unusual family circumstances." (De Leonibus:2) Porwall stated that in many areas absentee rates averaged 10 to 15 percent. (Porwall:3) Obviously, the major concern was over the wide disparity between reasonably acceptable attendance rates and the reality of the daily attendance figures. While no educator expected perfect attendance in light of the figures presented, it was clear that a problem existed. A 1928 study indicated that 63% of school absences were caused by illness, while only two and one half percent were attributed to truancy. However, De Leonibus stated that at present "absences are likely to be for personal convenience or recreation and not for iliness." (De Leonibus:2)

The approaches taken by educators in an attempt to combat student absenteeism have yielded mixed results. The most successful of these programs have taken into account the characteristics of the specific attendance problems in the district adopting the plan. The solutions represented a variety of educational philosophies and local situations. There was no definitive solution that could be seen as a remedy in all cases. Instead, the remedies reflected the diverse nature of the educational system.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Student absenteeism continues to be a major problem. There are many factors which cause students to be absent from school. Some of these are legitimate. However, the amount of truancy and excessive

absence from school continues to be a concern. Absenteeism adversely affects many aspects of a school's program as well as the individual academic achievement of the students involved. The schools are challenged to create workable solutions to the problem based upon the needs of the student as well as the goals of the school itself.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study had two major purposes. The first purpose was to survey the major causes and effects of student absenteeism. The second major purpose was to explore, in a highly detailed fashion, the many programs implemented by educators in an effort to combat absenteeism in their schools.

ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study was divided into three major parts. The first part dealt with the major causes of student absenteeism. This section was divided into two major areas, student-level explanations for absenteeism and school and society-level explanations.

The second major section of this study involved the ways in which absenteeism negatively affected the two major components of the problem. The first part of this section dealt with the effects of absenteeism on the school. The second part of this section concerned itself with the effects upon the academic achievement of the student.

The third major part of the study included possible solutions to the problem. For the purposes of this study, the solutions were divided into six categories. The first category included plans which were pri-

marily punitive and restrictive in nature. The second category included plans which used parental involvement as a primary ingredient. The next category involved plans which were designated as student-centered as a result of their emphasis on placing the burden for change on the student. The next major category involved plans which were based upon counseling approaches and strategies. The fifth category included plans which stressed the involvement of community agencies in the solution of the problem. The last category in this section of the study involved approaches to absenteeism which were seen a non-traditional or alternative approaches not normally included as part of the traditional school setting.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Brimm, Forgety, and Sadler reported in 1978 that "To date, there have been relatively few research investigations dealing with the causes and effects of student absenteeism." (Brimm, Forgety, and Sadler:65) This fact is reflected in the final form of this study. The programs which were presented in the section dealing with possible solutions were categorized according to the major elements of the program. Many of the programs used a combination of approaches to achieve the desired results. Finally, the programs presented in the study were seen as practical solutions which may or may not have succeeded in other school situations. They did serve, however, as the major point of emphasis for this study.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Absenteeism -- "continual interruption of attendance." (Gove:6)

Age of Compulsory School Attendance -- "That period of a pupil's life during which the pupil must be enrolled and remain in an instructional program approved by a state department of education." (Good:20)

Attendance -- "the act of being present, particularly at school." (Good: 47)

Attendance Officer -- "a school officer charged with the duty of studying cases of nonattendance, determining reasons for nonattendance, and getting pupils back to school." (Good:47)

Average Daily Attendance -- "a statistic compiled by the formula: the sum of the days attended by each student enrolled divided by the number of days school is in session: this statistic is usually figured for the period of one year." (Good:48)

Compulsory School Attendance -- "the requirement established by the state legislature that all children, with certain specified exceptions, must attend school; the lower age limits vary from 6 to 8 years, the upper abe limits from 16 to 18 years in the various states." (Good:48)

Excused Absence -- "absence from school for any reason recognized as legitimate by the school, for example, attendance at religious ceremonies, illness of the pupil or a member of the pupil's family, or death in the home." (Good:3)

Habitual Truant -- "a child given to constant and continual absence from without the knowledge or consent of his parents, the number of such truancies sometimes being specified as a means of determining legally when to consider a child a habitual truant, but with considerable variation from system to system." (Good:625)

Legal Absence -- "absence from school for reasons in accordance with regulations established by law." (Good:3)

School Phobia -- "a generalized irrational anxiety expressed in deterioration of self-control when in school or when forced to attend school." (Good:420)

Tardiness -- "the act or state of being late; in school the term refers to a pupil's failure to be in a prescribed place, ready to begin work, at a prescribed time." (Good:584)

Truancy -- "(1) deliberate absence from school on the part of the pupil

without the knowledge and consent of the parent (2) absence of a pupil from school for which no reasonable or acceptable excuse is given.(This latter concept broadens the definition considerably and makes it synonymous with unexcused absence.)" (Good:625)

Truant -- "a youth who is absent from school without the knowledge and consent of his parents; legally defined, in some states, according to the frequency of occurrence of such absence; popularly, a youth who is absent from school without a valid excuse." (Good: 625)

Unexcused Absence -- "absence from school for reasons that are not recognized by the school as legitimate, for example, absence because of play, truancy, illegal work, etc." (Good:3)

ANNOTATIONS

THE CAUSES OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

An Overview

Birman, Beatrice F., and Natriello, Gary, "Perspectives on Absenteeism in High Schools," Journal of Research and Development in Education 11:29-37, Summer, 1978.

The authors categorized the possible explanations for absenteeism into three categories. The first category involved student-level explanations. The most common were the students' lack of adequate socialization and ignorance of approapriate behavior. The second group of explanations, the school-level group, was primarily concerned with peer pressure and school organizational patterns and their adverse effects. The authors labeled the third group societal-level explanations. These included changing social mores and community values.

Student-level Explanations for Absenteeism

Eaton, M.J., "A Study of Some Factors Associated with the Early Identification of Persistent Absenteeism," Educational Review 31:233-242, November, 1979.

The purpose of this study was to determine if anxiety and difficulties in relating to people were factors in excessive absenteeism from school. The study was done in Birmingham, England in a total of 21 schools. The students studied were divided into the 9-11 age group and the 12-14 age group. The factors studied included age, sex, anxiety, parental status, and ability, as well as relationships with parents, teachers, and peers. Neither parental status nor relationships with parents showed a significant statistical relationship to persistent absenteeism. The most significant factors related to absenteeism were the relationships with teachers and peers. The author also concluded that these, as well as age and ability, were interrelated and combined to cause the problem.

Morris, Gordon T., "The Truant," Today's Education 61:41-42, January, 1972.

The author of this article discussed some of the major causes of truancy. One factor that was widely accepted as an important one was home environment. Unhappiness at home was a major factor in truancy cases. Parental alcoholism and drug abuse and simple neglect were factors in this cause. Another significant cause involved student drug abuse. The author concluded that the use of narcotics caused a truancy problem. Poverty was not found to be a major factor in the cause of absenteeism. The major blame, according to the author, rested on the parents.

Platt, A.W., "Intrinsic Causes for Public School Absences," School and Society 57:307-308, March 13, 1943.

This study tried to determine some of the intrinsic causes of absences. A variety of questionaires were used on a variety of populations. Some of the findings pointed to various factors. A group of 80 sixth and seventh graders were asked to name real friends. The number of friends was compared to the students' absences from school, and it was found that the more friends a student had, the fewer absences he had.

Senna, Joseph, M.S.W., J.D., Rathus, Spencer A., Ph.D., and Siegel, Larry, M.A., "Deliquent Behavior and Academic Investment Among Suburban Youth," Adolescence 9:481-494, Winter, 1974.

This study was conducted in an effort to determine if a relationship existed between delinquency and academic interest and involvement in high schools. The study found that absenteeism correlated most highly with a hedonism attitude, and that absenteeism might be viewed as a hedonistic activity. The authors also suggested that pot smoking and drinking might adversely affect attendance in the case of hedonistic youngsters.

Stennett, R.G., "Absence from School: Norms by Sex and Grade," The Journal of Educational Research 60:351-354, April, 1967.

This study was conducted in an effort to determine how attendance varied according to sex and grade level. The study involved a large sample from a rural county in Minnesota. The samples were taken from the 1964-65 school year and the records of the three previous graduating classes in the county schools. The author found boys to be better attenders at all levels than girls. However, the relative levels of attendance of the two groups paralleled one another. The median figure for days missed for both groups decreased rapidly from kindergarten to grade four. From there it remained relatively constant until it again declined in grade seven. The absence rate remained relatively constant in grades seven through ten. The absence rate drammatically increased in grades eleven and twelve.

Washington, Roosevelt, Jr., "A Survey - Analysis of Problems Faced by Inner-City High School Students Who Have Been Classified as Truants," The High School Journal 56:248-257, February, 1973.

This study was conducted in a public high school in a large city in the Midwest. The author attempted to identify the general categories of factors which caused truancy. Each student in the study was interviewed in an attempt to diagnose the major problem area which caused the student's truancy. The factor which most frequently led to the student's truancy was adjustment to school work. The author speculated that this mirrored the academic weakness of the student responding. The second most common response involved some personal psychological problem the student had. The third most common response involved the student working at a job outside of school. These were the major factors seen by the author as contributing to the truant's aversion to school.

Society and School-level Explanations for Absenteeism

Duke, Daniel Linden, and Meckel, Adrienne Maravich, "Student Attendance Problems and School Organization," Urban Education 15:325-357, October, 1980.

This study was conducted at a junior high school and a senior high school in California. The authors found that absenteeism was a significant problem in the school, but the organization of the school was not designed to help eliminate the problem. The first factor discussed, division of labor, pointed out the tendency of the school personnel to pass the responsibility for attendance policy enforcement back and forth among themselves rather than taking direct responsibility for it. Another organizational concern involved the classification of absenteeism as a problem. Most teachers and administrators resisted this classification because it involved direct enforcement of a compulsory attendance regulation. Teachers and administrators did not want to pay the professional or psychic price to do so. The system of rewards and sanctions for teachers who did or did not enforce attendance policies was not very strong. The students also did not have a very strong system of rewards or sanctions presented to them. The authors also found major deficiencies in the schools' policy making and training procedures.

Greene, James E., Sr., "Factors Associated with Absenteeism Among Students in Two Metropolitan High Schools," Journal of Experimental Education 31:389-393, Summer, 1963.

The author began this study in an attempt to discover what, if any, demographic differences there were between the best and worst attendance records in two urban high schools. The author also wanted to determine if there were differences between the factors seen in advantaged and disadvantaged schools. The author used 10 factors including I.Q., English grades, age, socio-economic status, absences from school, and the results of psychological tests. The author found that the following factors influenced attendance problems: low parental opinion of school, a previous history of absences, low marks, over ageness, inappropriate curricula, inflexible academic standards, and teachers lacking the approptiate skills needed to deal with problem students. In both advantaged and disadvantaged schools, good grades and high I.Q. were associated with good attendance. Other factors comparing the two schools yielded inconclusive results.

Levanto, Joseph, "High School Absenteeism," NASSP Bulletin 59:100-104, October, 1975.

The author of this selection conducted a systematic study of a large public high school in Connecticut to determine the factors related to adsenteeism. The author found that, among other factors, absenteeism increased each year from the ninth grade through the twelfth grade. He also found that students who lived with both parents had a lower rate of absenteeism than those from single parent homes. In addition, students in college preparatory programs had lower rates of absenteeism than those in general programs. The author also found a significant correlation between attendance and class rank and I.Q. scores. Those with higher I.Q.'s and higher class ranks had higher rates of attendance. Black students were absent more than white students, and Jewish students had the lowest rate of absenteeism among major religious groups.

Lietz, Jeremy Jon, "Comparing School Grades with Deportment and Attendance for the Disadvantaged Elementary Pupil," Education 96:291-296, Spring, 1976.

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between student discipline problems and attendance patterns in classes with teachers categorized as either high or low graders. The behavioral data was compiled using the number of deportments, or referrals to the office, given by the teachers for disruptive behavior. The group of low graders submitted 263 deportments in 1973 as compared to the 48 given by the group of high grading teachers. The students were studied over a two-year period as they moved from one teacher to another. Those students who had a significant number of disciplinary referrals and two consecutive years with a low grading teacher showed a gain in attendance rates. Those who experienced two years of high-grading teachers showed a drop in attendance. The study suggested that low grading teachers were more successful in improving student attendance levels.

Moos, Rudolf H., and Moos, Bernice S., "Classroom Social Climate and Student Absences and Grades," Journal of Educational Psychology 70:263-269, April, 1978.

This study sought to find if a relationship existed between the social climate in individual classrooms and absenteeism. The study found a significant correlation. In classrooms which were high in competition and teacher contact, but low in teacher support, the rate of student absenteeism was higher than other classrooms. In addition, students in those classes with high absenteeism rates stated that they watched the clock often and did not enjoy the class. They also felt that it was easy to get into trouble in the class and that passing the class was difficult. The study indicated that teachers who established control early and then helped the students understand the explicit and implicit rules of the class, had lower absenteeism rates in their classes. The authors concluded that excessive competition in a classroom apparently increased the cognitive growth of some students while increasing the absenteeism rate of others.

Wright, John S., "Factors in School Attendance," Phi Delta Kappan 58:358-359, December, 1976.

This study was designed to explore the relationship between attendance and other school factors. The findings were summarized in this article. The author found that there was a relationship between population density and attendance. The more dense the population, the higher the rate of absence. The author also found that as school size increased, so did the absence rate. In addition, the author concluded that schools with a high percentage of state-mandated requirements had significantly higher rates of absence than those which used the phase elective programs. Schools with lower teacher-to-student ratios had lower absence rates. The author concluded the article by stating that these factors deserved further study to determine their definite impact on school absenteeism.

Wright, John S., "Student Attendance: What Relates Where?" NASSP Bulletin 62:115-117, February, 1978.

The article summarized the findings of a study conducted by the author in an effort to determine the relationships between attendance and curriculum, school organization, and staff characteristics. The study had as its subjects every secondary school in the state of Virginia. As a result of the data collected, the schools were classified as urban or suburban schools. The author found a strong statistical correlation between attendance and age of the staff in urban schools. Urban schools with younger staffs had better attendance. In addition, urban schools with work programs which offered credit without classroom requirements had higher attendance averages. Urban schools with lower pupil to teacher ratios tended to have better attendance. In suburban schools, work programs and a higher percentage of health and physical education classes were factors which related to better attendance. Large suburban schools had poorer attendance than smaller ones. Suburban schools with open campuses had better attendance than those with closed campuses.

THE EFFECTS OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

The Effects Upon the School

Brimm, Jack L., Forgety, John, and Sadler, Kenneth, "Student Absenteeism: A Survey Report," NASSP Bulletin 62:65-69, February, 1978.

This selection dealt with the results of a survey of secondary school administrators. According to the authors, each day more than two million students are absent from American schools. Eighty-six percent of those responding to the study indicated that absenteeism was a major concern. In addition, most of those responding felt that an inordinate amount of time and effort was spent dealing with attendance problems.

DeLeonibus, Nancy, Absenteeism: The Perpetual Problem. The Practioner, vol. 5, no. 1, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 162 424, National Association of Secondary School Principals, Reston, Va., October, 1978, 13 pp.

This selection dealt with the depth of the attendance problems and some of the disruptive effects it had on the school. Between 1957 and 1976 adult job absenteeism remained relatively stable. During the same period, student absenteeism increased in terms of percentage of days missed. In the past, most absences from school were attributed to illness. In 1928, 63% of all absences were caused by illness. However, the author reported an increase of student absence due to other factors. The author stated that the major increase had been in casual truancy. The author also reported that the normal rate of absence for a student per school year should be about 4%, or seven days, according to health officials. This figure applied to a normal, healthy school-age child and would reflect a school attendance average of well over 90%.

Neill, Shirley Boes, editor, Keeping Students in School: Problems and Solutions. AASA Critical Issues Report, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 177 704, American Association of School Administrators, Arlington, Va., Education News Service, Sacramento, Calif., 1979, 74 pp.

This study dealt with the findings of a survey taken of 1,414 members of AASA. Ninety-five percent of those responding cited one or more attendance problems as major difficulties in their districts. In addition, although health officials maintained that a 4 to 5% absence rate per day should be normal, 47% of those surveyed, reported a rate between 6 and 10% in their districts. The author also listed some negative results of poor attendance as seen through the survey responses. Those included permanent intellectual damage to the student, the overall lowering of academic standards, frustrations and morale problems experienced by teachers, poor community relations, increased paperwork burden, and reduced state aid.

The Effects on Academic Achievement

Finch, F.H., and Nemzek, C.L., "Attendance and Achievement in High School," School and Society 41:207-208, February 9, 1935.

This study was undertaken in an effort to discover what relationship, if any, existed between attendance and achievement. The study was conducted in Minniapolis, Minnesota at West High School on the 1934 graduating class. The total of days present was used as well as class grades and I.Q. scores. The authors concluded that, for both boys and girls, the amount of attendance was related to school marks.

Kersting, Joe, "Absences and Averages," School and Community 53:17, February, 1967.

The author of this study set out to determine if a relationship existed in his junior high school between attendance and grades. In each of two semesters, the attendance records of 100 students who had the best grade point average were compared to that of 100 students who had the poorest grade point average. In all cases in all three grades, the students with the high grade averages had better attendance averages than the students with the low grade point averages. For example, in the ninth grade during the first semester studied, the top 100 averaged 1.87 days absent and a grade point of 3.365 on a four-point system. The group with the lowest 100 students had a grade point of 1.171 during the same period while they averaged 5 absences. In addition to those figures, the author reported that of the 36 students involved in truancies during the time period, only one could be called a successful student.

Odell, C.W., "The Effect of Attendance Upon School Achievement," Journal of Educational Research 8:422-432, December, 1923.

This study concerned the relationship that existed among standardized test scores, average school marks, and attendance figures in first through eighth grade students. The author found that achievement age, as measured on standardized tests, did have a definite, although slight, connection with attendance. A more definite connection was shown between attendance and average school marks. The author also attempted to determine whether pupils who attended school regularly one semester were likely to do so the next semester. The author found only a slight positive relationship between attendance during one semester and attendance in the succeeding semester.

Rozelle, Richard M., "The Relationship Between Absenteeism and Grades," Educational and Psychological Measurement 28:1151-1158, Winter, 1968.

This study sought to determine the relationship, if any, between attendance and grades. The point of the study was to determine if poor attendance caused poor grades of if poor grades caused poor attendance. The author used the three-year attendance records of students in Evanston Township High School, Evanston, Illinois. The attendance figures were compiled as well as the grade figures earned by the students. In addition, the course combinations of the school were classified as far as content was concerned. The author found a causal relationship that suggested a positive relationship between prior absences and the subsequent grades earned. In short, although the study results were not absolutely conclusive, the data suggested that poor attendance caused poor grades.

SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM

Punitive and Restrictive Plans

Bartlett, Larry, and others, Absences. A Model Policy and Rules, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 162 433, Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, Des Moines, September, 1978, 17 pp.

This study detailed an adminstrative model designed to improve the attendance rate of a given school district. The philosophy behind the model was that a student must attend school regularly to receive maximum benefit from the school's educational programs. It included a detailed policy on absences and tardiness and gave acceptable excuses for them. The policy also strictly outlined procedures for making up work missed and policies for penalties to be given in the event of unexcused absences. The policy even went so far as to outline the responsibilities and rights of the truancy officer.

Brokowski, William W., and Dempsey, Richard A., "Attendance Policies and Student Performance," The Clearing House 53:129-130, November, 1979.

The subject of this study was the effects of a restrictive and punitive attendance policy on the students of the New Milford, Connecticut High School. The study spanned a two year period. During the first year, there was no such policy. The policy was initiated during the second year, and attendance and academic figures were compared. In the second year, the juniors and seniors with low I.Q. scores showed an average improvement in attendance of 3%, the largest increase of any group in the study. The number of courses failed in this same group also declined. Academic grades for the younger students did not significantly increase or decrease. The authors concluded that the implementation of a restrictive and punitive attendance program may result in improved academic performance and attendance in some students.

Davis, Dick, "One Solution to the Inner-City Attendance Problem," Phi Delta Kappan 56:560, April, 1975.

This article reported the effects of a two pronged attack on absenteeism at a high school in Omaha, Nebraska. The first area of change involved the reorganization of the school's attendance policy and procedures. This was done in an effort to make the policy more systematic and efficient. The second part of the attack involved the classification of students into groups based on their attendance patterns. Parental conferences were held with parents to discover the causes of abscence or tardiness. In addition, rewards were given to those students who attended class regularly. Also, an effort was made to help the students understand the school's new policies. The program reduced tardiness by 50% and absences by 25%. In addition, the author reported that discipline problems had also declined in the school.

Hakanen, Lauri J., "Combating Student Truancy: A Working Plan," Illinois Schools Journal 2:25-28, Winter, 1980.

This selection involved a study of an attendance program at Harlem High School in Rockford, Illinois. The new policy featured a highly structured, six-step program. On the occasion of a student's first truancy, the parents were contacted and the student received a zero for all classes missed. The measures taken for each successive truancy grew more punitive and involved an increased level of parental contact. Suspensions, both in-school and out of school, were also used with lenghts varying according to the number of offenses. The final step involved the expulsion of the student for the remainder of the semester. The program had a positive effect on the truancy rate. The percent of truant students decreased from 11.2% in August and September to 1.8% in January. The plan emphasized student due process and active parental involvement.

Hazell, Samuel H., Compulsory Attendance and Illegal Absenteeism: An Irresoluable Problem? Let's See! Educational Resources Information Center, ED 122 352, n. pub., 1976, 22 pp.

This study was a detailed analysis of the New Jersey compulsory education statutes. It also analyzed many of the key court decisions which affected the way in which the laws had been applied. The author offered many suggested revisions for the state laws including the clarification of the students' responsibilities above age 16, a re-defining of the county attendance officers' powers and duties, and the establishment of a state-wide committee to study possible changes in state laws. On a local level, the author suggested such measures as informing parents of the district's attendance policies, adopting an attendance policy consistent with state policy, and hiring an adequate number of attendance officers.

Jett, Daniel L., and Platt, Melva Lee, "Pupil Attendance: The Bottom Line," NASSP Bulletin 63:32-38, February, 1979.

The authors of this article offered a systematic, school-wide approach to attendance problems. It began with teachers teaching the virtues of regular attendance to the students. The program also included an entirely new system for recording and categorizing student absences. In addition, the school established the position of attendance clerk and established lines of communication between the clerk, faculty, and administrators. The authors reported that the program was successful in improving attendance patterns as well as changing students attitudes about school and themselves.

Phillips, John A., Jr., The Attendance Nightmare, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 150 748, Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Anaheim, California, February 11, 1978, 7 pp.

This study described an attendance plan implemented in the public school system in Savannah, Georgia. The plan included many measures designed to solve a myriad of attendance problems. To reduce tardiness, after a ten minute grace period in homeroom, a student would only be admitted to school when accompanied by a parent. Any student who accumulated ten absences in a quarter, received no academic credit. Special field trips were awarded to homerooms with the best average daily attendance. Special activities were planned for Mondays and Fridays, the two highest absentee days. All truancy cases were referred for legal action. Students 16 years and older were threatened with expulsion unless they established regular attendance patterns. Alternative programs were developed to help students raise their self-esteem. The pupil/teacher ratio was reduced. The author reported that the average daily attendance increased 4% to 86% over the previous year. The following year the average daily attendance was approximately 89 to 90%.

Parental Involvement Plans

Bauer, Raymond R., and others, The Development of an Early Intervention System for the Reduction of Unexcused Absences in Elementary and Secondary Schools, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 133 895, Maxi I Practicum submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ed.D., Nova University, March, 1976, 81 pp.

This study was designed to develop an early warning system to recognize truancy patterns. The authors also wanted to develop an intervention system to interfere with those patterns. The plan was divided into two phases. The first phase involved parent notification and involvement. The second phase consisted of pupil counseling and curriculum modification. Each phase involved a number of steps which were taken sequentially. Those steps ranged from a phone call to a home visitation. The results of the plan were favorable. The first step phone call alone was successful in returning 254 out of 432 students back to school. The program was also effective in making administrators and attendance officers more aware of attendance. This factor led to the early identification of truants and chronic absentees.

Bittle, Ronald G., "Recorded Telephone Messages: A Technique for Reducing Absenteeism," Educational Technology 17:49-51, April, 1977.

This program was based upon the belief that phone contact between school administration and the parent can reduce absenteeism. The idea was tested in an Illinois high school. The school designated 37 of its students. Each was given a coded number that identified them. The parents were advised of the number and told they could call each morning for a report of their child's attendance. The school secretary recorded a phone message listing the code numbers of those absent each day on an automatic answering machine. All the parents had to do to check their child's attendance was to call. The program proved to be a success, according to the author. The major reason for this success was seen to be the involvement of the parents on an everyday basis.

Copeland, Rodney E., and others, "Effects of a School Principal Praising Parents for Student Attendance," Educational Technology 12:56-59, July, 1972.

This study involved a group of elementary school students who were enrolled in a remedial summer school program. Attendance in the program was not compulsory. The subjects were divided into two groups. The first group's parents received calls asking that they send their children to school. In addition, after each child in this group attended two or three sessions, the principal called the parents and praised them for sending their children. The other group received the initial call asking that their children attend, but no follow up call after their children had attended. The mean attendance percentage of those in the first group was 82.7% during the call with praise stage. The mean percentage of the other group was 31.2%. The authors concluded the technique involving the principal's call praising the parents was the key to the statistical difference.

Fiordaliso, Richard, and others, "Effects of Feedback in the Junior High School," The Journal of Educational Research 70:188-192, March, 1977.

This study was based upon the assumption that there was a positive relationship between school attendance and delinquency. The attendance project was carried out during the 1974-75 school year in a rural area in the East. There were three groups of eighth graders chosen for the study. One group was enrolled in the academic phase of the program, and another was enrolled in a social skills program. The third group served as a control. The program included a strict attendance policy as well as phone calls and letters to parents when the children were absent. Another aspect of the plan was the use of positive letters and calls to parents when their children attended regularly. After each group's base attendance rate was determined the effects of the two programs were computed. Both the academic group and the social skills group showed a major increase in attendance rates.

Hoback, John R., "The Problem of Attendance," NASSP Bulletin 60: 20-29, February, 1976.

The author of this selection proposed a new approach to attendance problems based upon the realization that society had changed and education should adjust to the changes. The approach was based upon the initial assumption that the student must take responsibility for his attendance. In addition, truancy was seen as a symptom of a larger problem. The basis of the new program involved the role of the classroom teacher. Each teacher was required to give a complete course description and policy statement on attendance to the students. It then became the student's and parent's responsibility to inform the school when attendance was impossible. The parents chose how the school would contact them in case of absence. The first option gave the parents the right not to be informed about their child's attendance. The second option involved the school notifying the parents only when attendance became a problem. The third option caused the parents to be notified after every absence or tardiness. The program put the responsibility for attendance squarely on the shoulders of the parent or guardian.

Suprina, Richard N., "Cutting Down on Student Cutting," NASSP Bulletin 63:27-31, February, 1979.

The plan presented by the author was designed to reduce illegal student absenteeism. The plan had three steps. The first step was taken upon the occasion of an illegal absence. When this happened, the parents were notified by mail. If a second incident occurred, the teacher and parent were scheduled for a conference. The third step involved continuious legal absence. If this occurred, the student was withdrawn from the class. The plan also included punitive measures taken as a result of withdrawl from the class. The author reported that the parental involvement of the plan was the key to its success. In addition, the school experienced a two-thirds reduction in student class cutting.

Student-centered Programs

Childs, Mary Lee, "Making Students Accountable for Absences," NASSP Bulletin 63:119-120, April, 1979.

The attendance policy at Central High School in Thomasville, Georgia called for student failure in the event of five unexcused absences. If a student exceeded five absences, he could appeal the class failure to a committee composed of administrators, counselors, teachers, and students. The student had to sign a form and give a reason when he returned from an absence. Parents were notified after the third and fifth absence. If the review board decided in favor of the student, he could receive credit. If it decided against the student, the decision could be appealed. The author reported that the average daily attendance increased 6% after the plan was implemented.

Fernandez, Edward, and Cardenas, Manuel, "Absenteeism: Is There A Solution?" NASSP Bulletin 60:87-91, November, 1976.

The plan detailed in this selection was implemented during the 1974-75 school year in the Las Cruces, New Mexico high schools. The plan shifted the responsibility for absenteeism from the administration to the student and parent. Each student received 10 days "sick leave" each semester. After the 10 absences were used, the student forfeited the grade and credits for the class. In addition, three tardies were counted as one absence. The author then compared the attendance figures for the 1974-75 and the previous two years. The mean attendance figure for 1972-73 was 90.76%. The percentage for 1973-74 was 90.05% as compared to a 1974-75 percentage of 95.62%. In addition, the average number of days missed per student in 1974-75 was 7.9, down from 16.6 in 1972-73 and 17.9 in 1973-74. The author also reported that tardiness was decreased system-wide and severe forms of discipline such as suspension were reduced. In addition, the number of failing grades decreased.

Garcia, Elio J., "Instant Quarter-Credit Concept-An Answer to Class Cutting?" NASSP Bulletin 63:39-43, February, 1979.

This system for truancy control was based upon the four academic quarters of the school year. If a student passed a quarter he received credit for it immediately. The students were allowed two unexcused absences each quarter. After that number was reached, the students received an "F" for the quarter. The major point of the program involved the isolation of each quarter. It was not possible for the student to gain full credit for a year's work in a class unless a passing grade was earned in each of the four quarters. This was true no matter what the average of the four quarter grades was. The author reported that the daily absentee rate decreased by 19%. Tardiness declined 19%, and the number of classes missed declined by 50%. In addition, there were 25% fewer failing grades and the number of failing students declined by 18%.

McCulloch, Dewey, "No Excuses Wanted - Or Needed," School Management 18:28-29, April, 1974.

Ferndale High School in Michigan, implemented a "no excuse" absentee policy. Under the system, a student missing any class more than 11 times for any reason received no credit for that class. Three tardies counted as one absence. The plan was designed to put the responsibility for attendance in the hands of the student. After the third, seventh, and twelfth absence, the parents were notified of the situation. The program improved the attendance at Ferndale High 60%. The absentee rate dropped from 15% to 6%. Other area schools which adopted the program also showed a significant decline in absenteeism. This was true despite the overall increase in absenteeism noted in other Detroit-area schools. Student attitudes regarding attendance also improved. According to the author, most felt an increased concern for getting to class and getting there punctually.

Minkler, Roy, "Humanizing Attendance Procedures," The Clearing House 53:266-267, February, 1980.

The truancy prevention program stressed the improvement of the clerical business of attendance reporting and more effective team counseling. The objective of the program was simply to improve the average daily attendance percentage. The program began with 45 hard core truants. In order to get into the program, the students had to accept the responsibility for attending placement classes. Those classes included special English, math, science, and reading. The students signed a contract that committed them to the program. Everyday each teacher signed the card and commented on the academic progress and attitude of the student. The parent and attendance supervisor also signed the card. After three weeks of successful work, the program was eased for each student until re-entry into the regular program was possible. The author concluded that the program was successful in improving attendance.

Programs Based on Counseling Approaches

Brooks, B. David, "Contigency Contracts with Truants," Personnel and Guidance Journal 52:316-319, January, 1974.

The approach taken by the author was based upon the behaviorist view of truancy as a maladaptive behavior. The plan relied upon the contigency contract with the truant. The author explained the approach through the presentation of two case studies. In both cases, the student was given a very specific list of tasks that must be completed in order to receive certain prescribed rewards. The tasks included regular class attendance, scheduled contacts with counselors, and rap sessions. The reward included the lifting of restrictions originally placed on the student by the parents. The student signed the contract and in both cases successfully complied with its provisions. The author determined that the program was attractive because it was economical, it placed the responsibility on the student, and it actively involved the parent.

Cretekos, Constantine J.G., M.D., "Some Techniques in Rehabilitating the School Phobic Adolescent," Adolescence 12:237-246, Summer, 1977.

This article dealt with two case studies of school phobic adolescents. The approach in both cases was based on individual counseling and guidance programs. In the first case the author used an attendance contract which stressed getting the student back to school quickly, at least on a part-time basis. The student also received individual tutoring within the school by his regular teachers. The guidance counselor at the school also smoothed the way for the subject by explaining the case to the subject's teachers and directly supervising the student's progress. The second case study involved special classes to help integrate the student back into the school environment. When the subject left school, the teacher and other members of the class visited the student's home. This technique put the subject at ease and he soon returned to school. In both cases, the individual counseling solved the problems. The cooperation of the school and teachers was an essential element in the success of the program.

Dockery, Margaret Ries, "The Price of Admission Was 6 Weeks of Perfect Attendance. Bribery? Maybe. Effective? Yes," School and Community 56:18, May, 1970.

This approach was very simple and, according to the author, very effective. The author planned a sock hop for the students in grades 4 through 8 in her building. For the younger children, she planned a party. The only charge for admission was the student's perfect attendance for six consecutive weeks before the social events. At the end of the six weeks, 400 children, approximately one-third of the school population, were eligible to attend the social functions. The parties were a success, and many of the students who were not able to attend the party told the author that they were coming to the next party.

Grala, Christopher, and McCauley, Clark, "Counseling Truants Back to School: Motivation Combined with a Program for Action," Journal of Counseling Psychology 23:166-169, March, 1976.

This study was conducted by the authors using 32 male students between 13 and 17 years of age. The subjects attended on the average only two weeks out of the month. The students were divided into four groups. The first group was counseled with threat appeal and supportive instruction. The second group also received threat appeal but no instruction. The third group was given optimistic appeal with supportive instruction, and the fourth group was given optimistic appeal and no supportive instruction. The two groups receiving supportive instruction increased attendance whether the counseling was based on threat or optimistic appeal. The authors concluded that the supportive instruction which included an explicit program for change was the major reason for the positive results.

Morgan, Ronald R., "An Exploratory Study of Three Procedures to Encourage School Attendance," Psychology in the Schools 12: 209-215, April, 1975.

This study attempted to measure the effects of material rewards and peer and teacher reinforcement on attendance. The children in the material group were offered toys and candy if they attended school. Another group received the material rewards and peer social reinforcement. A third group received social reinforcement by the teacher. There was also a control group which received no reinforcement. The results of the study indicated that all three approaches were successful in reducing absenteeism according to the author.

Myers, Robert D., An Intervention Model to Improve School Attendance and Achievement, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 185 655, Individual Practicum Report, Nova University, August, 1979, 152 pp.

This plan was designed to improve the attendance in the Fox Chapel School District in Pennsylvania. This effort was made largely through a program designed to improve the student's self-image. The author made the assumption that improved academic performance would translate itself into improved attendance rates. Each subject-matter area developed its own list of behavioral objectives, as well as a strategy for remedial work. This work was designed to improve the skills of the underachiever. The approach taken was described by the author as humanistic. The results of the program were positive. Both grades and attendance gains were considerable according to the author.

Nyangoni, Betty, The Media is the Message: Using the Media to Improve School Attendance, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 183 683, International Association of Pupil Personell Workers, St. Louis, Missouri, October 18, 1978, 11 pp.

This report dealt with a media approach to pupils who had displayed irregular attendance patterns. The author suggested that the print and electronic media could be used to do so. In addition, the author gave a seven-step plan for a media campaign which was designed to accomplish her goals. The means used were then coupled with the message desired. The author went on to say that while some school districts had used the media effectively in the past, further use of these powerful channels could lead to the solution of attendance problems.

Oden, Walter E., A Plan for Improving Student Attendance at Brownsville Junior High School, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 155 807, n. pub., 1978, 21 pp.

This project had as its goal, the improvement of the average daily attendance at the school to 95% or better. At the onset of the plan, the average was 86.84%. The approach used by the project involved community resources and incentives. It is important to note that this was an all-school project. Members of the faculty and staff, as well as administrators, helped on the project. The project involved tangible rewards such as t-shirts, yo-yo's, and chicken dinners for pupils who maintained good attendance. The intangible incentive included school dances and field trips. The program also included a heavy emphasis on calls to the parents of chronically absent students, post cards sent to the home, and referral to community social agencies. The author reported that the program was successful.

Rodell, Daniel E., "Taking a Ride on a Merry-Go-Round: An Attempt at Systems Change in a Public School," The High School Journal 62:257-262, March, 1979.

This selection described an experiment that attempted to eliminate truancy and the characteristics in the nature of the school which reinforced truancy. The experiment involved an extensive program of meetings including the children and counselors. The discussions in the meetings were followed by concrete actions. In one instance, the group members expressed an interest in auto mechanics, and as a result, an engine was purchased for use in industrial arts classes. The attendance figures and GPA of the groups were compared. Both GPA and attendance figures improved in the group involved with the discussion technique. The author concluded that there was a relationship between the implementation of the program and the rise in the attendance percentage as well as the GPA figures.

Ungar, Karen V., Douds, Alex, and Pierce, Richard M., "A Truancy Prevention Project," Phi Delta Kappan 61:317, December, 1978.

This selection outlined a truancy program that stressed individual counseling in an attempt to teach the student how to succeed in school. After an initial skills assessment, the students were given prescriptive programs to help them acquire the school skills which they lacked. This was an attempt to make school a less frustrating place for the students and thereby increase attendance.

Plans Utilizing Community Resources

Farber, Irvin J., Impact of Home and School Visitor Service: Preliminary Findings, Educational Resources Information Center, ED 183 967, Phildelphia Board of Education, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, October, 1979, 16 pp.

This study was undertaken by the author in order to gauge the impact of the home and school visitor service upon the attendance rates in Philadelphia schools. In attempting to do so, several findings came to light. The major conclusion, however, was that the home and school visitor service had no real impact on attendance rates. When comparing the attendance rate of a randomly selected group of students involved in the program before and after referral, the author found no improvement in their rate of attendance. The author suggested that perhaps the teachers who referred students to the program waited too long before doing so. He also pointed to the inconsistency of referral practices as a possible cause of the lack of improvement.

Fitzgerald, Thomas F., "First Down and Goal to Go! SARB Attempts to Score on Student Absenteeism," Thrust for Educational Leadership 5:11-12, March, 1976.

This article detailed the creation of School Attendance Review Boards, or SARB. The plan emphasized the coordinated efforts of the community agencies and school resources. The boards included a parent as well as representatives of the school district, county probation department, county welfare department, and other appropriate agencies. In a typical case a student with a pattern of absenteeism was referred to the board only after all of the in-school remedies had failed. The board then reviewed the case and decided upon a course of action. This course of action involved the use of all community resources available to the board. It was very optimistic about the outlook for the success of the program.

Gross, Mel, "Community Involvement Helps Relieve Attendance Problems," NASSP Bulletin 61:115-117, April, 1977.

The approach for combating truancy was based on the assumption that school children must be taught the importance of rules and regulations. Many of the children involved in this program were from homes which placed no value on education. In addition, many of the teachers at the junior high school involved in the program were from an entirely different social, economic, and racial background. The school established a youth task force which included community agencies as well as religious leaders and school counselors. The group held monthly meetings to evaluate progress and decide on future referrals. As the program progressed, teachers and still more community agencies became involved. The approach led to the feeling of partnership among all groups concerned. The author conceded that, while the program did not reach all of the problem students, it had been successful in some cases.

Plans Based on Non-traditional Approaches

Graslie, Louis, "Five Years of Open Campus," NASSP Bulletin 57: 76-78, January, 1973.

Belle Fourche, South Dakota High School implemented an open campus program. Under the program students were required to be in school only when they had regularly scheduled classes. The students' classes were scheduled into blocks with the upper classes generally attending in the morning and freshmen and sophomores in the afternoon. During the unscheduled parts of their school days the students were free to use the library, study hall, or student lounge. The school officials found that attendance had improved and discipline problems had decreased. The author also reported that in-school truancy, or skipping, was virtually non-existent.

Hakanen, Lauri J., "The Stride Program: An Answer to Absenteeism," Phi Delta Kappan 59:348-349, January, 1978.

This article dealt with a program called Stride (Students and Teachers Really Interested in Dropout Education). The goals of the program were to have students attend school voluntarily, to learn more when at school, and to improve their self-images. Admittance to the program was selective and not open to good students looking for an easy road. Students in the program were assigned to self-contained situations while studying basic skill areas such as math or English. The self-contained class structure allowed the teacher to understand the students' problems. The development of a complete curriculum was to be planned for the future. The program had many positive results. Community leaders liked it because the students who formerly roamed the streets were now back in school. In addition, the author reported that the students exhibited a new found interest in school and improvements in morale.

Lieberman, Myron, "The Future of the Custodial School," Phi Delta Kappan 58:122-125, September, 1976.

This article was based on the belief that teen-agers should spend less time in school and graduate earlier. The author offered many reasons for this premise including the fact that secondary students learned as much in school when attendance was reduced. Other rationale offered included the lowered age of majority, earlier physical and intellectual maturation, a high level of student absenteeism, youth alienation, and the lack of a sound basis for the use of the traditional school year and day. The author went on to say that these factors may not bring about change because of teacher's unions and other pressure groups lobbying against them. He went on to state that the major issue was economic. The increase in the number of youths in the work force was the major economic factor. In addition, higher education was seen as having to adapt to the younger age of their students.

Piatt, James G., "Compulsory Attendance Can Be Fatal," NASSP Bulletin 58:1-5, February, 1974.

This article was a reaction to the new compulsory attendance law in California which forced students to attend school until they reach 18 years of age. School administrators have witnessed an increase in vandalism, truancy, and other disciplinary problems since the passage of the law. In addition, because of the surplus of students forced to remain in school, overcrowding became a problem. The author also presented an alternative program, the continuation school, a fifteen hour per week school designed for the unwilling student. The author maintained that these schools had helped many students who previously had completely dropped out of school. The author also maintained that the traditional educational approach did not fulfill the needs of this type of student and a non-traditional approach should be persued.

McCafferty, James F., and Turner, Daniel S., "Discipline in the Innovative School," The Clearing House 44:491-496, April, 1970.

The article among other things, explored the problems involved with attendance at innovative schools. The article was written about Abington High School, Abington, Pennsylvania. Because of the modular scheduling, 25% of the day it was impossible to know exactly where each student was. In addition, students were more tempted to cut class because each module was only 20 minutes long. Students also missed classes unintentionally because of confusion with the modular schedule. Staff members also had a tendency to hurry because of the twenty minute modules and, as a result, neglected careful attendance recording.

Sentelle, Sam P., "Helping Hand for the Chronic Truant," Educational Leadership 37:471-472, March, 1980.

The program outlined in this selection detailed an attendance program for chronic truants. At the truancy school, students were responsible to one teacher all day, yet they took their assignments from the teachers at their regular school. The students remained in the program until they established a regular attendance pattern. This program forced the student to make a real committment to attending school regularly.

Sparks, Dennis, "A Personal View of ALPHA," Educational Leadership 32:120-123, November, 1974.

This selection outlined the features of ALPHA (Alternative Learning Program for the High School Age). The program was developed as a result of the Livonia, Michigan school decision to adopt a restrictive attendance policy. ALPHA was developed as an alternative program for students dropped from their classes as a result of the new policy. The students were required to meet the same standards as those enrolled in the traditional program. The credit could be earned through independent study, volunteer work, classes in the high school, or work experience. The only required attendance was at a two hour workshop, five days a week. The workshop was mainly concerned with values clarification and interpersonal skills. The author concluded that the program was a success and that many students who might have dropped out of traditional schools succeeded because of ALPHA.

SUMMARY

The research indicated that there were many student-level explanations for absenteeism. Eaton found that the student's relationships with teacher and peers as well as the student's age and ability combined to cause absenteeism. Morris found that unhappiness at home contributed to student absenteeism. Platt concluded that students with many friends tended to have better attendance rates than those with comparatively fewer friends. Senna, Rathus, and Siegel indicated that absenteeism was closely associated with a hedonsitic attitude among some students. Stennett concluded that age and sex determined attendance patterns. Boys were slightly better attenders at all level than girls. In addition, school attendance varied according to age level. Washington found that academic weakness was a major factor in absenteeism. In addition, Washington concluded that a student's psychological problems and after-school work also contributed to absenteeism.

The study also indicated some major factors at the school and society levels which caused absenteeism. Duke and Meckel found that school organizational factors such as division of labor and the system of rewards and sanctions could contribute to absenteeism. Greene found that low parental opinions of school, inappropriate curricula, inflexible academic standards, and teachers lacking appropriate training were also major factors. Levanto found that children from two-parent homes attended more frequently than those from single-parent homes. He also concluded that students from certain ethnic groups tended to be better attenders than those from other groups. Moos and Moos found that classrooms high in competition and teacher contact but iow in teacher support

had higher absentee rates. They concluded that competition apparently raised the level of academic achievement of some students while increasing the absentee rates of others. Wright found that population density, school size, the number of required classes, the student-to-teacher ratios, and staff age were associated with absenteeism.

It was found that student absenteeism had some definite effects upon the school. Brimm, Forgety, and Sadler found that absenteeism forced administrators to spend an inordinate amount of time on attendance matters at the expense of other aspects of their jobs. Neill found that absenteeism caused frustrations and morale problems for the staff, the lowering of academic standards, poor community relations, and reduced state aid.

The study also found that absenteeism had an effect on student academic performances. Finch and Nemzek found that attendance was related to school grades. Kersting found that students with higher grade point averages had better attendance rates. Odell found that results on standardized achievement tests and class grade were related to school attendance. Rozelle found that poor attendance caused poor grades rather than poor grades causing poor attendance.

Many programs were established by individual schools and school districts in an effort to reduce student absenteeism. Brokowski and Dempsey found that a punitive and restrictive plan increased attendance rates in their school by 3%. Davis concluded that a plan based on the reorganization of school attendance policies and identification of problem students reduced absences by 25%. Hakanen's highly structured, six-step plan significantly decreased truancy. Phillips' program, which

included punitive measures for tardiness and the denial of credit after ten absences, increased the school's daily attendance rate four to six percent.

Bauer found that phone calls to parents and home visitations were successful methods for getting children back into school. Bittle concluded that taped telephone attendance reports could decrease student absenteeism. Copeland demonstrated that complimentary phone calls to parents whose children had attended school regularly increased attendance. Hoback's plan yielded successful results by forcing parents to determine how and when they were to be notified of their child's absence. Suprina found that parent-teacher conferences reduced class cutting in the school by two-thirds.

Fernandez and Cardenas reported on a plan which featured a limit of ten absences. After this number of absences from a class was reached, the student was denied credit in the class. The plan raised the average daily attendance almost 5% in the school. Garcia reported on a plan which denied credit after two unexcused absences in a given quarter. The plan reduced absences by 19%. McCulloch reported on a plan used in Ferndale, Michigan, which gave students 10 absences in a given class. After that number was reached, the student was denied credit in the class. Minkler found that a plan which forced students to sign a contract committing themselves to an alternative program and regular attendance could reduce absenteeism in some students.

Brooks used contingency contracts as a counseling approach to reduce absenteeism. Rap sessions and a system of rewards were also used in the plan. Cretekos used individual counseling techniques to

bring school phobic youngsters back to school. Grala found that instruction on how to deal with school tasks was a necessary element in any counseling approach. Both Dockery and Morgan reported on programs which featured material rewards. Podell found that a counseling program involving close cooperation between counselors and students increased both grade averages and attendance rates.

Farber reported that a home and school visitor program in Philadelphia proved ineffective in lowering absence rates. Fitzgerald, however, maintained that a program using many county agencies and school resources could be effective. Gross reported on a plan which used a youth task force composed of community, school, and religious leaders. The author found that the program yielded positive results in some cases.

Among the non-traditional programs surveyed, Hakanen described a plan which assigned students with attendance problems to self-contained classes. The classes were designed to help the students acquire necessary school skills. Piatt presented a plan which included a continuation school. The school met only 15 hours per week. Sentelle detailed a program which took the student out of the regular school. The students then attended a truancy school which required them to be responsible to one teacher for the entire day. Sparks described an alternative plan which included independent study, work study, and volunteer work. The only required attendance consisted of a two-hour workshop every day.

CONCLUSIONS

It was concluded that there were many student-level explanations for student absenteeism. Among the most prominent were peer relationships, poor parental and teacher relationships, ability, age, home environment, psychological problems, and after-school work. In addition, it was also concluded that some factors in the school and society had a positive relationship to student absenteeism. School organization, inappropriate curricula, inflexible academic standards, and poorly trained teachers were found to be contributing factors. It was also concluded that population density, student-to-teacher ratios, school size, and staff age influenced student attendance.

The effects of student absenteeism were found in the school and the academic achievement of the student. Among the negative effects on the school were frustrations and morale problems among the staff members, lowered academic standards, poor community relations, reduced state aid, and an inordinate amount of time spent on attendance matters. It was also concluded that poor attendance had a negative effect upon both school grades and academic achievement.

It was concluded that the many different types of programs used to combat absenteeism met with varying degrees of success. The punitive and restrictive plans used administrative and disciplinary techniques to achieve their goal. The parental involvement plans used parents as agents for change. Student-centered plans attempted to force students to accept responsibility for their own actions. The counseling plans were seen as an attempt to change the very nature of the behavioral patterns which cause student absenteeism. It was also concluded that

plans using community resources could be effective in reducing absenteeism. In addition, alternative or non-traditional plans were seen as effective for students who had trouble coping with traditional school programs. It was also concluded that many of the plans used several different types of approaches to achieve a reduction in student absenteeism.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1.) Schools seeking to alleviate their attendance problems study the particular circumstances present in the school before adopting a plan. The successful programs presented in this study were successful because the, fit the needs of the schools which adopted them.

2.) The school enlist the help of parents and community agencies in the effort to reduce student absenteeism. It is clear that the schools can not solve the problem alone.

3.) Teachers and other members of the school staff become more involved in the programs for reducing absenteeism. Although absenteeism can be viewed as an administrative problem, many of the causes of absenteeism begin in the individual classroom.

4.) Alternative programs be developed for students who have trouble adjusting to the traditional structure of most schools. Educators must begin to realize that traditional schools do not meet the needs of all students.

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